

Scholastic Audits and Audit Team Members

History of Scholastic: Audit Process

In 1999-2000, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) organized educators (KDE leadership, school and district leadership, Highly Skilled Educators) and other stakeholders across the state and in collaboration with National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE) to develop a research-based document to define the elements of whole school improvement for elementary, middle and high school levels that, when fully implemented, would produce desired learning results. The result of this work is the *Standards and Indicators for School Improvement (SIS)*.

After completion of the document, KDE contracted with Betty Edwards to design and develop training for a scholastic audit process based on the criteria established in the SIS document. KDE staff, school and district leadership, and contracted scholastic auditors were trained to conduct scholastic audits in the fall of 2000, and audits began shortly afterward. Schools classified as in need of assistance according to state accountability guidelines and assigned Highly Skilled Educators were required to have scholastic audits.

The audit report was used to develop school improvement plans to guide whole-school improvement and in turn, improve student achievement. Additionally, schools for which scholastic audits were not required, but which failed to meet goals also participated in the scholastic audit/review process. Many of these additional audits were conducted as a result of school/district requests. School and district leadership teams across the state have used the reports to guide school improvement.

Appeal of Scholastic Audit Process

No school or district has ever made a formal appeal of the scholastic audit process or report.

Selection of Audit Team Members

Scholastic audit team members are self-nominated and apply through a KDE RFP process. A cross-agency team of KDE employees, under the direction of staff from KDE's Division of Human Resources, evaluates the applications and selects individuals who meet the criteria established in the RFP. Those individuals will be offered contracts as scholastic auditors. Scholastic auditors are active and retired school administrators, district administrators, university staff, teachers, parents and Highly Skilled Educators.

Auditors' Experience (2010 Leadership Assessment Team Members)

Auditors who worked on the recent Leadership Assessments were chosen from among those who were under current contracts and have experience with the process. In addition to the basic training completed in the fall of 2009, all auditors currently under contract received training designed specifically around the leadership assessment process, including the goals, laws, regulations and the consequences of their recommendations.

The scholastic auditors who were selected this spring from the larger pool of qualified contractors to conduct the 15 leadership assessments in persistently low-performing schools and the districts where

these schools are found come from a wide variety of backgrounds in education. Many of these auditors have successful school- and district-level experience. Highly Skilled Educators worked on each leadership assessment as technicians, writers and observers. Team leads serving on the Jefferson County school district's leadership assessment team have experience in the roles of superintendent and district- and school-level leadership in small, medium and large urban (i.e., Columbus, Ohio) districts. In addition, a national consultant who has successful experience managing turnarounds in large urban settings was a member of the Jefferson County leadership assessment.

States Using Kentucky's Standards and Indicators for School Improvement

As of 2006, Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Louisiana, Montana, New Jersey, Ohio, Oklahoma and Virginia are using Kentucky's SISI. The Chicago City School District and the Northwest Regional Lab also are using the document and supporting materials.

New Study on Validity of Standards and Indicators for School Improvement

Recently, Western Kentucky University (WKU) completed research on the reliability and validity of the scholastic audit process. Findings show a high degree of validity for the process and will be shared with KDE in the form of written reports in the next several weeks.